
The Worst Enemy Conquered.

A Brief Discourse
On the *Methods* and *Motives* to pursue

A Victory

Over those Habits of

SIN,

Which War against the SOUL.

Delivered, on *June 6th.* 1698. the Day for
Election of Officers, in the ARTILERY-
Company, at *Boston.*

By Mr. JOSEPH BELCHER, Pastor
of the Church in *Dedham.*

*Nunquam Bella Bonis, nunquam certamina desunt;
Et quocum certet, Mens pia semper habet.*

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I COR. IX. 26, 27.

*So fight I, not as one that beateth the air ;
But I keep under my body, and bring
it into subjection : ---*

ONE of the most lively similitudes under which the life of a Believer is express and set forth, is that of a *warfare*, which is a life not of ease and idleness, but attended with many hazzards, and hardships, and which every Christian must endeavour to endure as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ. As a Souldier converses with many dangers and difficulties, and dwells as it were continually in the very Territories of Death, and the Grave ; so the life of a Christian is so full either of visible or invisible difficulties, temptations, and dangerous affairs, with which he must enter the lists, and is obliged to encounter ; as that he may be hardy to pass the *Pikes*, and for to carry his Sword *continually in his hand*. The Devil the Captain

one, but with different lighting.

Rachel T. Gung

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Ms. D. 1767



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1 COR. IX. 26, 27.

-- So fight I, not as one that beateth the air :
*But I keep under my body, and bring
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ONE of the most lively similitudes under which the life of a Believer is exprest and set forth, is that of a *warfare*, which is a life not of ease and idleness, but attended with many hazzards, and hardships, and which every Christian must endeavour to endure as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ. As a Souldier converses with many dangers and difficulties, and dwells as it were continually in the very Territories of Death, and the Grave ; so the life of a Christian is so full either of visible or invisible difficulties, temptations, and dangerous assaults, with which he must enter the lists, and is exposed to encounter ; as that he may be said dayly to pass the *Pikes*, and for to carry his *Soul continually in his hand*. The Devil the Captain general

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neral and commander of the black Regiment of Hell, is restless in his attempts ; like him (who whether conquered or did conquer) was never quiet : if so be either by himself or his instruments, he may swallow us up, and utterly destroy us. The *World*, the *men* of it ; some of these are the *Militia* and *Auxiliaries* of Satan, Enemies to the truth, and therefore continually opposing, both it, and its professors : and as for the *things* of the *world*, the honours, pleasures and profits of it, these have their snares, and stratagems. And as by the flatteries and allurements of these, the Devil would fain have overcome our Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain Himself : So also by the same, would he fain overcome those that are his followers, and who have listed themselves under that Captain. But besides the many foreign, a Christian hath many inbred and domestick adversaries ; *We have enemies of our own house* : there are not only the temptations of the Devil, the oppositions of the world, which we have to conflict with ; but there are also the *lusts of the flesh*. The holiest man that ever trode upon the face of the earth, (except the Son of Man, that Man Christ Jesus, who was not a meer man, but the eternal Son of God, and God manifest in the flesh) except him, that best of Men, that ever blest the earth with their residence upon it, have had flesh lusting in them, unto sin ; and sometimes leading them into Captivity, and making them *bond slaves* for

for a season : and this enemy is more frequent & constant in his assaults and bickerings, than a Christians other enemies. If his foreign or external enemies, do at any time stand still, *Sin*, that treacherous inmate and curled adversary, will rarely give him any truce or respite at all. If there be a cessation (for a time) of the former, he can scarce pass an hour without many fights and skirmages with the latter. As therefore a good Soldier must not spare so much as one enemy, when he hath such a command and commission given him : so a Christian must not spare so much as any one iniquity or lust ; his orders from his great Commander & Lawgiver are so : but he must endeavour the suppressing, beating down and conquering the same. And how strong & strenuous the Apostle *Paul* was (who frequently speaks of himself as a Soldier, not only as he was a Minister of the Gospel, but also as he was a Christian : I say how strong and strenuous he was,) as in his Spiritual warfare in general, so in particular in beating down his internal Enemies ; *Sin & Lust* : we shall see if we reflect a little upon the latter part of the Chapter before us, & particularly the words that have been read unto you. The Apostle having in the former part of the Chapter, been declaring his liberty in reference to *Marriage* ; as also his requiring of *Maintenance* of them among whom he had been labouring in the work of the Ministry : and yet how he had abridg'd himself, &

forborn to use the same, that so he might not be over-burden-some to them ; nor hinder the progress and success of the Gospel among them : he doth in the latter part of the Chapter, particularly at the 24 v. endeavour to press his former discourse, by telling them the difficulties of getting to Heaven, and also the obligation they lay under to run in that race, and to contend in *that warfare*, that would bring them thereto. The method chosen by the Apostle to do this in, is borrowing an Elegant similitude from some of those *Games* the *Romans* and *Corinthians* were wont to divert and exercise themselves in. There were several sorts of *Games* celebrated, as the *Pythean*, the *Neemean*, the *Olympick* and the *Isthmean Games* : the latter of which was most proper to Greece. And in which *Games* there were wont to be *Running & Wrestling*, and *Riding*, and other feats of Activity ; by which the Apostle doth indeavour to set forth the difficulty that there is in, and the labour that must be exercised by those that would *strive* and *fight* in, the way to Heaven. And that he might further prevail with them so to *Run*, as to *win the prize*, so to *Fight the good fight*, as to *obtain the crown* ; he sets before them the examples not only of other *runners* and *wrestlers*, who were wont to be carefull and painfull, in dieting and ordering themselves before, and straining and putting themselves forth to the utmost in their race & combat (tho' the crown and garland for which they strove, was mean

mean and inconsiderable, (yea nothing) compar'd with that, which the Apostle with those to whom he spake, laboured and contended for; the former being a corruptible, the latter a crown that is incorruptible) I say, the Apostle doth not only set before them the examples of those *Gamesters*, to press them to their duty: But he also proposes to them his own example, telling them what he himself *did*, and also would *doe*. Like the valiant Commander, who doth not say to his Souldiers (in an arduous and difficult encounter) *Ite illuc, goe forth thither*, as if they were to go forth upon Service, and he tarry behind in his Tent; but *Venite huc, come ye hither, follow me, you shall go no further, than I will venture my own life*. The Apostle knew full well, that those that are indisposed & uninclined to duty; if those that dictate duty to them, and exhort them to the performance of it, are slothful & negligent in duty themselves, (I say) he knew full well, how that those that are uninclined and indispos'd to duty, might be ready to alledge the old proverb, *Physician, heal thy self: Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self*. To anticipate therefore, & prevent every thing of this nature, and to draw them to be active, industrious and very diligent in their Spiritual warfare, he tells them, he ran in the same Spiritual race with them, contended in the same Spiritual warfare, that he was their fellow Souldier; and gave them no other advice than he himself practised:

practised : and would only have them follow *Himself*, as Gideon said to his army, *Judg. 7. 17. Look on me and do likewise, as I doe so shall ye doe.*

In the words of our Text, we have the Apostle asserting and declaring, how he fought, and behav'd himself, in his Spiritual warfare ; and this the Apostle lays down,

1. *Negatively.* *So fight I, as one not beating the air.*
2. *Positively.* *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.* Where we have,

1. The object, or enemy that he encountred or combated with : in those words, *My Body.*

2. The act, or manner how he manag'd himself towards that object, or enemy ; and this is exprest by two terms. (1.) *I keep under my body.* (2.) *I bring it into subjection.*

So Fight I, not as one that beateth the Air, but I keep under my body. He fought but it was not as one that beateth the air. He did not act like a young Fencer, making only a flourish, and beating only the air ; but he fought in good earnest, and beat his adversaries, (The Enemies of his Salvation.)

My Body.] Body is not to be taken here, so much in a Physical, as in a Moral sence. We are not to understand by his body, only the Apostles fleshly part, that part of him which consisted of flesh and bones (which, body, is put in Scripture sometimes to signify) but by his body we are to understand, besides his outward man, his *Sin* ; that which the Apostle else where calls, *the body of Sin. Rom. 6. 6.*

And the body of death, Rom. 7. 24. *The old man. The flesh, with its affections and lusts,* Gal. 5. 24. Those carnal lusts and affections, which warred against the peace of his Soul. *These,* he maintain'd a war with, and indeavoured to keep under, and bring into subjection.

I keep under.] The Greek word [*UPOPIAZO*] which is here rendred *keep under*, signifyes to *Seize*, to *lay hold of*, to *grasp*, and to *gripe*, as a man would his adversary, and one with whom he contends for the Mastery : and not only so, but to *beat*, *knock*, *thump* and *pound*, as Wrestlers and Champions were wont anciently to do. And as some think the terme is borrowed from those *Runners* and *Wrestlers*, who were wont to contend in the afore-mentioned *Games*, and who were wont to beat and pound one another till they were black and blew, and of a gore blood ; and forc'd to acknowledge themselves, vanquished and over-come.

I bring it into subjection.] The Greek word [*DOULAGAGEO*] which is here rendred to *bring into subjection*, is sometime used, for a *leading Captive* ; and most properly signifyes, to *bring under Command*, in *Servitutem redigere* ; to make one a *Servant*. Thus the Apostle tells us, how he acted in his Spiritual warfare ; and in telling us what he did, he tells us what we ought to do. If we would be *Spiritual Fighters*, as all the Saints in their several Generations have been : and if we consider what the Apostle lays down here affirmatively, (viz. the

the keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection, as some do) as the means by which he came to be more than such a fighter, as only beats the air ; as the means by which he came not to loose his labour in his Spiritual warfare : There seems to result this plain truth, which we shall briefly (by Divine assistance) insist upon from the words, viz.

D O C T R I N E.

That those that would fight to purpose, in the Spiritual War, must indeavour to keep under their Body of Sin, and bring it into Subjection.

Or thus,

Those, and only those, do fight to purpose in the Spiritual War, who do indeavour to keep under, and bring in Subjection, all those carnal lusts and affections which they have warring in them.

In the brief speaking to this Doctrine, we shall attend only these three things. (1.) We shall indeavour to speak something of the nature of the duty : viz. *the keeping under the body of Sin, and bringing it into subjection.* (2.) We shall indeavour to shew how this keeping under this body of Sin and bringing it into Subjection, is necessary in order to the *fighting to purpose, in the Spiritual War.* (3.) We shall conclude with some brief Application.

First.

cast off its Service, and are resolved to live in perpetual Hostility with it.

Conclusion 3. *As when a man lifts himself under the banner of Christ, he breaks his league and correspondence with Sin, and proclaims a War with it ; so he hath had a mortal wound given to the habit of it by the Spirit of God.* When a man voluntarily offers himself to the Service of Christ, upon his proclamation & call, (I say) when a man is brought effectually to answer that call ; as he renounces his correspondence with sin, and enters upon a War with it : so, there is by the Spirit of God, a deadly blow given to the old man, our habit of sin. However in a mans natural estate he is under the dominion of sin. Yet when Grace comes into a man, the Spirit of God which is stronger than that strong man armed, comes upon him, overcomes him, and takes from him his armour wherein he trusted. Every one that doth indeed actually belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, is freed from the reigning power and dominion of sin : that is accomplished in him, *Rom. 6. 12, 14. That sin hath not dominion over him : and sin shall not reign in his mortal body, that he should obey it in the lusts thereof.* The Spirit of God hath spoiled sin of its power and dominion, and given it its Deaths wound. An unregenerate mans heart is Sins Territory : Sin is in such a mans heart as in its Throne, before the Spirit comes, but when that comes, and by that the nature is changed and renewed ;

Sin

Sin is cast out of its Throne, and condemned to die.

Conclusion 4: *Though a mortal wound be given by the Spirit of God to the habit of Sin, when a man Lifts himself under the banner of Christ, yet Sin is not then quite overcome and destroyed in a man: However Grace doth really subdue Sin, yet it does not wholly destroy Sin. Though it doth really purify a mans nature, yet in this life it doth not quite perfect his nature. A Christian must not expect to experience a state of perfection here in this life: No, that estate is reserved till he comes to experience a state of Glory. The best of men in this life have a double nature in them, as we may see of man in general, that he consists of Body & Soul; so we may say of every Godly Man (in a Theological sense) that he hath both Flesh and Spirit, Corruption as well as Grace. Though Sin be beat out of its strong holds, yet it hath betaken it self to its inward Castle, where it will remain and have a being in us, as long as we shall have a being here in this world. This Canaanite will dwell in the Land, nor can the Children of God drive it out of this City. God doth with us, in respect of Sin, (our inward Enemy) as the Psalmist prayed against his outward Enemies, Psal. 59. 11. Slay them not, scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O Lord our Shield. Thus doth the Lord do in respect of Sin, and Corruption in his Saints here in this World:*

World ; those enemies are brought down from that power and dignity, in which they were wont to be, but they are nor wholly slain. They are surrounded, are taken, arraigned, a Sentence of death is past upon them, and they are dead in Law, but yet they have their lives lengthened out for a season during our bodily life, nor can we till the death of the Body, expect perfectly to be freed from the body of death. The wise man proclaims a Challenge to all the world, to enter the Lists with him upon this account, *Prov.* 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made mine heart clean ?* And though there may be some of man-kind, that may falsely and presumptuously say that they have ; yet none can truly and safely say that they have : *For if we say we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us : 1 Joh. I. 8*

Conclusion 5. *Sin not being thus quite overcome and destroyed ; it follows that every man, who hath listed himself under the banner of Christ, hath a diversity of principles in him, between which there can be no amity and friendship, but on the other hand a continual warring. The principles, Sin and Grace, Flesh and Spirit are diametrically opposite one unto another, are the greatest contraries in the whole world, as contrary as light and darkness, as life and death, as good and evil, as Heaven and Hell. And being so opposite and contrary, they cannot be dormant, and latent in the Soul, but*

must needs be up in armes, endeavouring to vanquish and expell each other. These two principles are (as it were) the company of two armies, *Cant. 6. 13.* They lie intrencht and engaged one against the other. As long as a man keeps his league with sin and serves that, he feels nothing at all of this: *While the strong man armed keeps the Palace, his goods are in peace. Luk. 11. 21.* As long as Israel is subject to the Egyptians, and doth their drudgery, all is well, there's no stir; but when once they shake off that Servitude, and set out for Canaan, then they are pursued with all the forces and powers imaginable, to be brought back to their former bondage. Especially therefore upon a mans first chusing of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Captain of his Salvation, is this on-sett high; and not only then, but when we have made considerable proficiency, and have obtained much victory over Sin: Yea, those that have arrived to the highest Attainments are not free from this combat within, but like *Rebekah*, have twins, struggling in their wombs; the Flesh and the Spirit, like the twins in her womb, do war and strive one with another. *The law in the members wars against the law in the mind. Rom. 7. 23. the fleshly lusts war against the Soul. 1 Pet 2. 11. and the Soul also wars against them. Gal. 5. 17. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these two are contrary one to the other.*

Conclusion

Conclusion 6. *This keeping under the Body of Sin, and bringing it into subjection, consists in such a warring with Sin, as to endeavour its death and destruction : and the subjecting all our faculties and members to the Service of God and Christ. We must endeavour the death and destruction of sin in this sense ; there must be a Resistance unto blood striving against Sin, Heb. 11. 4. Sin will have it pleas to be spared and saved alive, and we may be willing to deal gently with it, as David gave charge concerning Absalom : this Prisoner of War will cry for quarter when the life of it is in danger, and will speak us fair, and make seemingly great propositions. Some sins will promise us profit and worldly gain, if we will not slay them ; as those ten men said to Ishmael, Jer. 41. 8. Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field : Others will promise us promotions, and worldly honour, as Baalak said to Balaam, Am I not able indeed to promote thee unto Honour : Others will promise us pleasures and delights, if they may be spared and indulged : Others will plead they are little ones, and therefore will desire they may escape : yea, and others will plead they are our Relations and our Kindred ; flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bones, and no man ever yet hated his own flesh ; but we must stop our ears against all their most cursed charmes, & endeavour to do by every Sin, as Joab by Absalom,*

thrust it through the heart. 2 Sam. 18. 14. Both small and great must be dealt with after this manner: The great ones, the Champions, the *Goliabs*, that come out of the Camp of these Enemies, these *Philistins*, must be fought with and kill'd, and the little ones must be also dash'd against the stones. This slaughter must be like that which *Saul* was commanded to effect against the *Amalekites*: 1 Sam. 15. 3. all sorts both young and old must be put to the Sword, and not so much as one *Agag* must be spared alive. And as there is in the duty we are speaking of, an endeavouring the death and destruction of Sin, so an endeavouring to subject all our faculties and members, to the Service of Christ: every thought we must endeavour to bring into obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. Our members, not only the parts of our Bodies, but the faculties of our Souls also, these must not be yielded as *Instruments of unrighteousness unto Sin*: but yielded as *instruments of righteousness unto God*, Rom. 6. 13. we must not any longer live the rest of our time, to the lusts of men but to the will of God, as it is exprest, 1 Pet. 4. 2. Our bodies, *i. e.* our whole man I conceive, a part is put for the whole man. Rom. 12. 1. *Our whole man must be presented a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God*: and when we do sincerely endeavour this, *viz.* the death and destruction of Sin, and the improving the whole man for the Service of God; though in many things we may fail,

fail, and sometimes by our indwelling enemy, be put to the worst, yet if this be our bent, inclination, sincere desire and endeavour, it will be accepted of God, and we shall be accounted by him, as such as do keep under the Body of Sin, and bring it into subjection. And thus of the first thing proposed to be spoken to; we pass to the second.

Secondly, We shall endeavour to shew, how this keeping under the Body of Sin is necessary in order to the *Fighting to purpose in the Spiritual War*; and here, if we lay these two or three considerations together, it will sufficiently appear.

1. *Every one that fights to purpose in this Spiritual War, hath given up himself to Christ*, he hath Lifted himself under him, he is engaged to fight under his Command and Conduct; he is to march and follow him in the Spiritual Warfare. Christ is their Captain, and they are his Souldiers; *God hath given Christ to be a witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people. Isa, 55. 4.* A Leader to go before them as their Prince and Captain, and a Commander to give them Laws and Rules for their obedience. And every one that is indeed engaged in this Spiritual War, have Lifted themselves under the Lord Jesus Christ, to follow him as their Leader, and to observe his Laws and Rules as their great Commander, and

are willing to follow him whithersoever he goes, and to subscribe all the Articles and Terms that he shall propose unto them.

2. Hence every such man is under the greatest obligation to endeavour the keeping under the Body of Sin, and bringing it into subjection. This is the Command of Christ; yea this was the very end of the Death of Christ: rather than Sin should not die, Christ himself became obedient unto Death. Now our very *Baptism* doth oblige us unto this, to fight against Sin to the very death of it. If that be *Sacramentum Militare*, then every one that hath taken that Oath, that hath received that *Press Money*, and yet is in friendship with Sin, and doth not endeavour the death and destruction thereof, he is *Proditor Militiae*, a Flyer from his Colours, and Runs into the Enemies Camp. But when we grow up, and actually give up our selves unto the Lord Jesus Christ, if we are sincere in our engaging our selves to Serve him; though we are not free from the assaults of Sin, yet we resist it stedfastly; yea, we have in some measure and degree mortified and subdued it; it is an inseparable Character of those that are Christs, Gal. 5. 24. *That they have Crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

3. The Body of Sin if it be not kept under,
and

and brought into subjection, will hinder from a faithful Serving of Christ: Fleshly Lusts are pernicious Enemies. Well might he say,

Inimicorum Nequissimum Carnem meam.

His Flesh was the worst Enemy in the world.

This Enemy is always present with us, it incamps in us, round about us, and doth most easily beset us, Heb. 12. 1. It lies in ambush behind, and in the midst of all our lawful affairs and employments. Yea, it frequently starts out upon us, and surprizeth us in our best duties and performances; when we would do good this is present with us to impede and hinder us, Rom 7. 21. It is adjacent and always at hand to oppose and hinder us in all our intercourse and correspondence with Heaven. So that unless we resist stedfastly, and endeavour to bring it under, it will Captivate us, Imprison us, and lay such weights and fetters upon us, by reason of which we shall be utterly unable, to walk at liberty and seek Gods Precepts. Psal. 119. 45.

4. A man is exposed to all the assaults of Satan and other Enemies, as long as he doth not endeavour to keep under the Body of sin, and bring it into subjection. In vain do we pretend to

maintain a War with Enemies abroad, if so be we are at peace with them at home; we lie open like a prey to our enemies without, if we do not see to it, that we keep under those that are within. The wise man tells us, Prov. 25. 28. *That he that hath no rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down and without walls; That man whose Spirit, i. e. his passions and unruly affections, been't kept under, and brought into order, that man is like Hazer, which had neither Gates, nor Bars to keep enemies out. Jer. 49. 31. He lies open to all the assaults and temptations of the Devil and the World; innumerable are the dangers & mischiefs that such an one is exposed to. And since Sin let alone doth so expose us; it concerns us to endeavour our own safety and security, to do what in us lies to obviate the danger, which by it we are obnoxious unto, and that by using all good means that it may be kept under, and subdued in us.*

5. *There can be no obtaining a Crown of Glory (which is the Reward through Grace of fighting to purpose in this Spiritual War) unless there be an endeavouring to keep under the Body of Sin, and bring it in subjection. Only those will be found to have fought to purpose, who shall obtain the Crown. The Apostle exhorts Timothy, 1 Tim. 6. 12. Fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold of Eternal Life, get a good title to that, then do we fight*

fight the good fight to purpose; and hence the same Apostle, speaks concerning himself, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.* And only those shall have this Crown, as a gracious reward of their fighting the good fight, who have maintained a War with Sin, and have endeavoured the death and destruction of that. 'Tis most certain, there are but two sorts of men in the world, there are no Neutrals, no middle state: Every man is either under the Rule and Government of the Lord Jesus Christ, or else he is under the command of the Devil his greatest enemy, he hath either Lifted himself under Christ's banner, or else he is a Souldier in the Devils Regiment. He therefore that willingly serves his lusts, and is in friendship with them; yea, that doth not endeavour the death and destruction of them, is an enemy to Christ, refuseth his Service: and shall such an one ever share in the glorious Reward, which they have conferred upon them who are faithful? No, instead of the reward of a friend, such an one shall have the punishment of an enemy. Luk. 19. 27. *Those my Enemies that would not that I should rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.* This is all the Crown they shall experience: And therefore,

6. *Those that do not endeavour to keep under the Body of Sin, and bring it into subjection, shall most certainly perish and be destroyed.* If we do not endeavour to keep under our body of Sin, and bring it into subjection, it will in a sence destroy us here in this world ; for it not being subdued, will grow outrageous and foil us before God, Angels and men : it will bring us into Scandals, and expose us to open shame. How many hath it served thus, who have indeed belonged unto the Lord Jesus Christ ? when they have let sin alone, and have discontinued the exercise of the Mortification of it : we may see it in *David, Solomon* and others : this enemy hath cast down many wounded, yea many strong men in this sence have been slain by it. But that which is the dreadful consequent and effect of not keeping under the body of sin, and bringing it into subjection, is the perdition and destruction that it exposes to in the world to come. This War with sin, will terminate in nothing short of the death of one of the parties engaged in it. If we are not the death of our Lusts and Corruptions, they will most certainly be the death of us, of our Souls : if we are conquered by them, and brought into subjection to them, we shall have no other stipend and pay for our Service, but *Death.* *Rom. 6. 23.* Our great Captain will not spare any man that spares any of his Sins. God hath appointed e-
evry

very Lust to death, they are all men of death by his appointment ; and whosoever spares them, or lets them go, his life must go for theirs. As it was said to him, 1 King. 20. 42. *Because thou hast let go out of thine hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore shall thy life go for his life :* we must therefore vanquish by indeavouring the subjection of sin, or else we shall be overcome by that, and must dye our selves. So that laying these things together, it is very evident and clear, *that those that would fight to purpose in this Spiritual War, must endeavour to keep under and bring into subjection, all those carnal lusts and affections, which they have warring in them.* And thus of the two first things proposed briefly to be touched upon : We come to the third and last, which is the

A P P L I C A T I O N.

U S E of Incouragement.

Let every one that would fight to purpose in the Spiritual War, endeavour to keep under their Body of Sin, and bring it into subjection. If so be we had no Lusts warring in us and against us, there would be no need of such an Exhortation ; but since we have, a necessity lies upon us to suffer it and attend it, and Wo unto us if we don't. We read concerning Moses, *Exod. 2. 11, 12. That when*

when he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren, he slew the Egyptian. There are if I may term them so, Egyptian Lusts within us, which ever and anon smite our Souls, which are nearer friends to us than a Brother : they are our darlings, our all ; when ever therefore we espy these cruel Taskmasters, (they would be so) smiting our Spiritual part, we must encounter them, and endeavour to slay them. To animate and incourage us hereto, I shall lay down but two particulars, unto which I shall subjoyn two or three words by way of Direction, and so conclude.

Motive. 1. *This combate after a while, you may hope, will not be Irsome and tedious, but pleasant and delightful.* Sinners that are overcome and led Captive by their Lusts, they count that Captivity their greatest Satisfaction, and most pleasant life, they like their Service, love their Master, and are unwilling to go out free ; they think they must change Naomi for Marah, and therefore when called upon hereto, are ready to say with the Olive tree and Fig-tree, *Judg. 9. 9, 11.* Should I leave my fatness, should I forsake my sweetness and good fruit ? should I leave the pleasures that I enjoy in walking in the way of mine heart, and the sight of my own eyes, to Mourn, to Fast, to live a strict life of Mortification ? this they cannot tell how to comply with. *Well, but give me leave*

leave to tell you, as to this warfare, you are under a mistake : You are not called to quit your pleasures, only to change the objects of them, and that every way for your profit and advantage ; to leave those that are low and base for them that are high and noble, sensual delights, for spiritual delights, the satisfactions of Swine, for those of Angels ; and therefore if pleasures and delights will charm you, or have any influence upon you, I will assure you, that here in this Warfare you may enjoy those that are rational and Heavenly, whereas as long as you continue slaves to your Lusts, you may enjoy only those that are base and filthy delights of a Beast, yea, of a Devil. Believe it, you will find one hour spent in prayer, mourning for sin, and secret Communion with God, better than many spent in the service of Sin ; and those lusts that Sinners are wont to indulge themselves in ; so that though the beginning of this incountring the Body of Sin may be hard, it will be easy after a while, and at length, very pleasant.

Motive. 2. *The Victory is certain, and also most signal and glorious.* This is that which encourages a Soldier to be Valiant, the hope of Victory ; and this is the priviledge of the Christian Soldier, that he shall most certainly have Victory. He is not left at uncertainty, to the chance of War, wherein the Victory in Battel, is not always to the

the strong : but a Christian may know and be assured, that he shall overcome and obtain the Victory. The issue of the War is revealed, and made known to us by Christ in his word : as Sin, Satan, Death and Hell, could not conquer our Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain himself, so neither shall any of them be able to conquer his Souldiers. A Christian may sometimes be foiled, and seem to be beaten back, but yet he shall recover himself again ; though he fall yet he shall rise again : It may be said of him, as of *Gad*, *Gen. 49. 19* *Though a Troop may overcome him, yet he shall overcome at last.* And as this Victory is most certain, so it is most signal and glorious, the Victory it self is most signal and glorious, and so is the Reward of it. The Victory it self is so, it's a greater conquest than to be Conqueror of the World ; for some that have been Conquerors of the World, have yet been taken Captives by their own lusts and affections, *Prov. 16. 32.* *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City :* he that ruleth his Spirit is better and more victorious and more glorious. This is the noblest and most signal victory, & the Reward also is most signal & glorious, it being no less than a Crown, not of silver or gold, but of Eternal Life ; if we through the grace and assistances of the Spirit, do kill and put to death the deeds of the Body, we shall live eternally. *Rom. 8. 13.* Let then

then the consideration hereof incourage us to our Duty. For *Direction* take a few particulars briefly.

Direction 1. Begin with this enemy betimes ; crush it in the first motions of it, it's easiest overcoming at the first. Warriors are wont to set upon their enemies, where they find them feeblest ; so we should set upon sin before it get head, and if we do, before it get too much hold upon our faculties, or break forth by outward acts, we may more easily subdue it, and hold it under, as a slave and vassal. These Lions, we may more easily conquer and tame if we set upon them while they are Whelps, whereas if we let them grow up as in a little time they will, to be salvage beasts, we shall find them very formidable, if not unconquerable. As soon therefore as we find this enemy to rebel, and to begin to War, let us rise up in Arms against it, and endeavour by force of the same, to quell it and bring it into subjection.

Direction. 2. Hold no parley with this Enemy ; it is so treacherous as that we had need awe our selves with a fear of being ensnared by it, and therefore must avoid all occasions of it. Keep out of the way of its temptations. Its excellent advice, *Prov. 4. 14, 15. Enter not into the path of the wicked,*

wicked, and go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. This enemy will say to us as *Jael* to *Sisera*, Turn in, Turn in to me, fear not; but if we do hearken to its Sollicitations, it hath a *Nail* to strike into our Temples; and be the death of us. It will take us as *Joab* did *Abner* by the beard, as if it would imbrace us; but if we take no heed, it will smite us under the *fifth Rib*, and shed out our bowels to the earth. It will come and kiss us as *Judas* did our Saviour, when as with him, it hath been plotting nothing less than the betraying us into our enemies hand: we must therefore hold no parly with it, nor come any nearer than needs must to any of its quarters. Nor will it be cast upon us in the day of Judgment, as a piece of Cowardise, thus to retreat from our enemy, but will be reckoned our greatest valour and courage: It is the truest *Magnanimity* and most *Heroick* valour, in our Spiritual warfare, to be afraid of the least iniquity, *Happy is the man that thus feareth always.*

Direction. 3. Cut off all the provisions and supplies of Sin; this is the Apostles advice, Rom. 13. 14. To make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. If we would ever subdue our Lusts, and be the death of them, we must cut off all the provision, which hath a tendency to support them and keep them alive. It is counted
excellent

excellent policy in War, to leave as little provision as may be in the Enemies way. It's best to burn it, and destroy it, though it be in our own Country, if otherwise, it will have a tendency to relieve and support our enemies. Thus must we endeavour to weaken the force of Sin, even this way ; we must set a guard over our affections, and inferiour appetites ; lay every thing under bonds, that we are in suspicion, will take part with the enemy : Endeavour the utter consumption of whatsoever would be like provision to our Lusts, to support them and keep them alive. We must endeavour to starve our Lusts, and if we afford them no sustenance, but endeavour to deprive them of every thing of that nature, we may hope that they cannot hold out long, but must surrender, and acknowledge themselves conquered.

Direction 4. *Improve all the weapons that the Christian Armour will afford you.* This armour consists of several pieces. We have a list of them. *Eph. 6. 13, 14.* And we must not content our selves with one or two pieces of this armour, but we must *put on the whole armour of God.* Especially of all the pieces of armour ; we must see to it, not to forget the *Sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God ; of this Sword, we may truly say as *David* did of *Goliath*,

Goliath, there's none like it. It is a two edged Sword, to cut the *Nerves* and *Sinews* of Sin asunder. And *Pray always* : this is not only a part of our Christian armour, but it is that which helps us, by which we are enabled to make a right improvement of all the rest : this is necessary all along through the whole of our encounter with the body of sin. We must therefore endeavour to manage this *without ceasing*, we must be continually lifting up our hearts and eyes to God ; and when ever an army of Temptations doth assault us, say with *Jehosaphat* 2 Chron. 20. 12. *O our God we have no might against this great Company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are unto thee.* This is the way to fetch Christ into the field, and battel, for our help, and then we may be sure of defence and protection, yea, of Victory and Conquest.

Direction 5. *In the Combat with Sin, aim principally at the General of those Enemies* : I mean your beloved darling Iniquity ; plant your main Artillery against that, that's the *Goliath* of these *Philistines* ; a mans darling Sin is a captain sin : that bears the authority in the Soul, and his other sins are under it as Souldiers ; it saying to one, *Go, and it goes*, and to another, *Come, and it comes* ; a mans other Sins are subservient unto this. This is the sin that is so much

much tended and waited on : Now if we would keep under those enemies and bring them into subjection, we must endeavour primarily and principally to destroy this principal of them ; as it was said to them, *1 King. 22. 31. Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel.* So say I, fight neither against small nor great Sins comparatively, but against this kingly, this master enemy ; bind this strong man, and you will easily take the house. Slay but this Champion, and the rest will flee, as we read of the *Philistines, 1 Sam. 17. 51. When they saw that their Champion was dead, they fled.*

Direction 6. *When you think you have attained any Victory or Conquest over Sin, take heed of Security.* Though the Enemy may be quier, yet fear least he should not be quite routed ; therefore be always upon your watch, ready to withstand a fresh assault ; Let every day be a day for the training and exercising of all your graces ; have them always in Battel array : See that they be continually in a Military posture, and set an exact guard upon your hearts, that so when ever your affections move or stir unseasonably or disorderly, they may be made to stand, not let to pass, till we know from whence they come, and whither they tend ; did we do so, in what excellent order might we have, and keep our Souls ?

Direction 7. *Do what you do in this Combate, not in your own, but in the strength of your Great Commander.* If ever we would storm and beat down the strong holds that are within us, it must be by the concurrence of Divine Grace; *the Weapons of our warfare are mighty through God,* 2 Cor. 10. 4. *we come to be more than conquerors through him that loved us,* Rom. 8. 37. This Enemy will sling us down as fast as we can rise, if we encounter it in our own strength; if therefore we would beat it down, we must say when we Encounter it, as *David to the Philistin,* 1 Sam. 17. 45. *I come unto thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel; whom thou hast defied.* *Asa,* when he had a vast Army of Two Hundred and Fourscore Thousand, Mighty men of Valour, to fight with the *Ethiopians,* he prays and trusts to God as if he had not one man. 2 Chron. 15. 11. *Help us O Lord our God, for we Rest on thee, and in thy Name do we go against this multitude.* So must we say when assaulted with Sin, *Help us O Lord our God, for we have no power against the same, but do rest on thee; God is able to make us stand against Sin; Through him we may do valiantly:* Psal. 60. 12. *he is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in Battel,* Psal. 24. 8. Though the archers may sorely grieve us, and shoot at us, yet he

he can make our Bow to abide in strength, and the arms of our hands may be made strong by the Hands of the mighty God of Jacob, Gen. 49. 23, 24.

Direction 8. *In the strength of your great Captain, endeavour to persevere and hold out to the end.* The Crown is at the end of the Warfare, it is not wont to be given till the Victory is gained, the promise is not to him that begins, but to him that overcomes. Our Lord Jesus Christ our great Captain, went forth conquering to conquer; and however we may pretend to be his Souldiers, yet we shall never obtain the Crown, unless we endeavour in our measure to imitate him in this regard. O then let us all endeavour to be faithful to the death, that so we may receive the Crown of life; and it is but a little while, that we have thus to engage and combat with sin! if we are faithful in the Service, and hold out, e're long we shall have done fighting, and shall come to triumphing; We shall put off our armour, and put on a victorious Crown. The Great Lord of Hosts, under whose Banner we fight, within a little time will remove our Quarters, he will draw us off from the Army Militant, here upon earth, to the blessed and triumphant in Heaven.
Then

Then we shall be out of Gun-shot, shall never
 be any more annoyed, molested, or disturbed
 with the body of sin, but shall be perfectly
 freed from it, made perfect in Holiness,
 and shall for ever be giving thanks and
 singing the praises of that God, who

giveth us the Victory, through

our **LORD JESUS**

CHRIST.

Amen.

F I N I S.

Rachel
Tiffany

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Book

Esther